

good of political parties. All it takes is for us to stop wallowing in the intoxicating sweet smoke of rhetoric—in the intoxicating aura of power, and start trying to be what we all loudly claim to be: statesmen! All it takes is for us to sober up, put the cards down, and fold up this drunken poker game that has already progressed far too late into the evening. We need to pass the coffee, get the red out of our eyes, and try to remember why the people sent us here in the first place.

If the people have lost respect for public officials, spectacles such as the one now being touted as a train wreck are surely the reason why. If confidence in the Federal Government is failing, this type of power-induced insanity that views flirting with an economic collapse as good political strategy is certainly one reason why. If we try to publicly pretend that we cannot avoid such a fiscal crisis, we need never again scratch our heads and wonder why people do not trust and do not believe politicians. There need be no crisis unless irresponsible partisan-crazed politicians create one, and we all know it.

I am encouraged by the press accounts of the meeting that occurred earlier this week between President Clinton and congressional leaders, at which they apparently agreed to negotiate a short-term spending plan that would avoid an October 1 Government shutdown. That would address at least part of the problem. And if cooler heads prevail, surely we can, and surely we must, find a way to settle our very real and very serious budgetary and appropriations differences in the coming weeks, as we were elected to do, without fashioning deliberate train wrecks that would be devastating to this great country of ours. If we fail to do so, if November brings such unimaginable devastation to our country, I fear not for our sorry lot, for we politicians will get exactly what we deserve. I fear only for the American people who so wrongly invested their trust in us in the first place.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ASHCROFT). The clerk will call the roll. The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I object for the moment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

OUR NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, on this, the likely final day of the debate

on the welfare reform measure before us, it is worth noting that in the lead story of the New York Times this morning, a story by Robin Toner, we read that "the White House, exceedingly eager to support a law that promises to change the welfare system, was sending increasingly friendly signals about the bill."

That is a bill that would repeal title IV-A of the Social Security Act of 1935 that provides aid to dependent children. It will be the first time in the history of the Nation that we have repealed a section of the Social Security Act. That the White House should be eager to support such a law is beyond my understanding, and certainly in 34 year's service in Washington, beyond my experience.

I regret it. I can only wish some who are involved in the White House or those in the administration, would know that they might well resign if they agree with the proposal that violates every principle they have asserted in their careers, honorable careers in public service.

I will state once again, we, yesterday, read Mr. Rahm Emanuel, a White House spokesman, saying the measure was coming along "nicely." Today, we get the same message in a lead story in the Times. If this administration wishes to go down in history as one that abandoned, eagerly abandoned, the national commitment to dependent children, so be it. I would not want to be associated with such an enterprise, and I shall not be.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 4, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4) to restore the American family, reduce illegitimacy, control welfare spending, and reduce welfare dependence.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Dole modified amendment No. 2280, of a perfecting nature.

Subsequently, the amendment was further modified.

Daschle amendment No. 2672 (to amendment No. 2280), to provide for the establishment of a contingency fund for State welfare programs.

Faircloth amendment No. 2608 (to amendment No. 2280), to provide for an abstinence education program.

Wellstone amendment No. 2584 (to amendment No. 2280), to exempt women and children who have been battered or subject to extreme cruelty from certain requirements of the bill.

Faircloth amendment No. 2609 (to amendment No. 2280), to prohibit teenage parents from living in the home of an adult relative

or guardian who has a history of receiving assistance.

Conrad amendment No. 2528 (to amendment No. 2280), to provide that a State that provides assistance to unmarried teenage parents under the State program require such parents as a condition of receiving such assistance to live in an adult-supervised setting and attend high school or other equivalent training program.

Jeffords amendment No. 2581 (to amendment No. 2280), to strike the increase to the grant to reward States that reduce out-of-wedlock births.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 10 minutes, to be equally divided, on the Wellstone amendment No. 2584, to be followed by a vote on or in relation to the amendment.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, there being some spare time in our schedule just now, I would like to take the occasion, and exercise the privilege, as I see it, of reading to the Senate the lead editorial in the Washington Post this morning. It is entitled "Welfare Theories." This is an editorial page which has been dealing thoughtfully, supportively, with welfare problems for 35 years.

On the opposite page, columnist George Will musters a most powerful argument against the welfare bill now on the Senate floor. The bill purports to be a way of sending strong messages to welfare recipients that it is time for them to mend their ways. But as Mr. Will notes, "no child is going to be spiritually improved by being collateral damage in a bombardment of severities targeted at adults who may or may not deserve more severe treatment from the welfare system."

The bill is reckless because it could endanger the well-being of the poorest children in society in the name of a series of untested theories about how people may respond to some new incentives. Surely a Congress whose majority proudly carries the mantle "conservative" should be wary of risking human suffering on behalf of some ideological driven preconceptions. Isn't that what conservatives always accused liberals of doing?

The best thing that can be said of this bill is that it is not as bad as it might have been. Some of the most obviously flawed proposals—mandating that States end welfare assistance to children born to mothers while they are on welfare and that they cut off assistance to teen mothers—have been voted down. There will be at least some requirements that States continue to invest resources in programs for the poor in exchange for their current Federal budget allocations. But they are still not strong enough, and are potentially loophole-ridden. Some new money for child care may also be sprinkled onto this confection.

May I repeat a powerful image, Mr. President:

Some new money for child care may also be sprinkled onto this confection.